

CAREER FOCUS

Why is my promotion cutoff score different each year?

BY MASTER SGT. DAVID HALVORSON

TEAM KIRTLAND career assistance advisor

With the excitement of the holidays behind us, many individuals will be investing more time and energy in preparation for promotion testing over the weeks and months to come.

As a result, many questions surface each year about the test scoring process, as we try to unveil the mystery behind getting promoted to the next higher grade. One of the more misunderstood issues involves the process of identifying the cutoff eligibility score for each grade and Air Force Speciality Code. This week we're going to answer the following question:

Q. Why is my promotion cutoff score different each year?

A: Although many people think that the Air Force Personnel Center or Air Force Headquarters determines the enlisted promotion cutoff scores each year, the truth is that it's actually the people competing for promotion who establish them.

Air Force determines how many enlisted members can be promoted each cycle based on projected grade vacancies, end strength and fiscal constraints. Then the Air Force Personnel Center applies that quota equally to each speciality code based on the total eligible population. This is referred to as equal selection opportunity.

Therefore, the total score of the last person selected within the quota then becomes the cutoff score for promotion within that speciality code.

And good news... ties are promoted! The bottom line is that cutoffs are determined by how many are selected and what their scores are.

For more information on Weighted Airman Promotion System policies and procedures, logon to the AFPC Web site promotions data at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/downtime/eprom.htm, or



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call or visit the Military Personnel Flight promotions section, 846-9154.

Want to make an appointment to see your Career Assistance Advisor? Call/email me at 846-6636 or david.halvorson@kirtland.af.mil.

FORCE DEVELOPMENT

Officer development teams up, running

BY MAJ. JOHN J. THOMAS

Air Force Personnel Center Public Affairs

RANDOLPH AFB, Texas—Every officer career field now has development teams set up to 'vector' officer career development.

"They're up and running," said Col. Kathleen Grabowski, Air Force Personnel Center chief of assignment policy. "They're using their new career planning diagrams for each Air Force Speciality Code and beginning to offer vectors to individual officers."

That feedback will be posted in the Development Team block on officers' online officer development plans, currently called the t-ODP, which replaced the former preference worksheet.

"These teams are the lynchpin of Force Development," she said. "They will try to identify needs of the career field, and available training and educational opportunities, and set-up a process where assignments officers can match the right person to the right job at the right time."

Each Air Force Specialty Code was represented when development teams convened for the first time this fall, meeting the deadline set by the chief of staff last year, said Col. Dave Nuckles, deputy chief of assignment programs and procedures.

"The development teams are all in the process of setting up the frequency and location of future meetings, depending on what best suits each career field," Colonel Grabowski said.

One of their first tasks was to determine appropriate developmental vectors for officers completing commander tours and officers finishing developmental education programs, Colonel Nuckles said. Future DT meetings will also address officers who are projected to move during their normal assignment cycles.

Under Force Development, the Air Force is seeking to build pools of experienced people at each level to be ready to fill important jobs. Development teams chart typical career paths and give officers feedback about what jobs, education and training will help them develop the capabilities to position them for future Air Force assignments.

Most teams consist of the career field manager, various colonels from within the career field community and an assignment officer from the personnel center. Not necessarily the same people will meet each time.

"Although there are some 'core' members of every DT, membership should be flexible enough to ensure the right leaders are present for each meeting," Colonel Grabowski said.

So far most teams are still organizing and focusing on logistical processes and parameters for how and to whom they will give guidance.

"Not all career fields are the same size and therefore not all officers will get the same type of scrutiny at every stage of their careers," she said. "Smaller career fields, with fewer jobs available may give individual feedback to captains, while some bigger career fields will find it more effective to give vectors only to majors and above, and to let assignments officers work the details of other officers' jobs directly with the individual and guided by the career planning diagram."

"As always, it's more of an art than a science. And we've gotten positive feedback from the teams that they are pleased to have the latitude to mold their DT processes to their career field as needed," she said.



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New relief act provisions protect service members

BY SGT. 1ST CLASS DOUG SAMPLE

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON—A new law replacing the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940 will provide military personnel—especially those deployed or called to active duty—greater protections to handle their personal financial and legal obligations, DOD officials said.

President Bush signed the Service Members' Civil Relief Act into law Dec. 19.

"The focus of the SCRA is the same as under the SSCRA: to provide protections to service members who have difficulty meeting their personal financial and legal obligations because of their military service," said Air Force Lt. Col. Patrick Lindemann, deputy director for legal policy in DOD's Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

"The SCRA is a significant law, because it clarifies and updates the provisions that existed in the SSCRA, while adding some additional protec-

tions," he said.

"Service members on long-term deployments or called to active duty should not have to worry about their families in their absence being evicted from their quarters without sufficient legal protections," he continued, "or that they are paying on a leased car or apartment that they can't use, or about civil legal proceedings they can't attend because of their deployment.

"These are some of the situations the SCRA covers so that service members are able to devote their energies to the military mission and the defense needs of the nation, and not on civil matters waiting for them at home," he added.

What Colonel Lindemann called "a significant change" added in the SCRA is an automatic 90-day stay of civil proceedings upon application by the service member. This applies to all judicial and administrative hearings. In the past, according to Colonel Lindemann, stays were discretionary with the courts.

The SCRA also makes it clear that the 6 percent limitation on interest rates for pre-service debts requires a reduction in monthly payments, and that any interest in excess of 6 percent is forgiven, not deferred, Colonel Lindemann said.

The SCRA also expanded the protection against eviction. Under the SSCRA, service members and their dependents who entered into a lease for \$1,200 or less could not be evicted without a court order. The SCRA increased that maximum lease amount to \$2,400 and added an annual adjustment for inflation. For 2004, the maximum will be \$2,465. Colonel Lindemann said this will significantly increase the number of service members entitled to this protection.

The SCRA also gives the service member who has received permanent-change-of-station orders or who is being deployed for not less than 90 days the right to terminate a housing lease with 30 days' written notice. Prior to the SCRA, service members could be

required to pay for housing they were unable to occupy.

One of the more significant provisions in the SCRA that did not exist in the SSCRA, Colonel Lindemann said, was an added protection for service members who have motor vehicle leases. Any active duty service member who has received PCS orders outside the continental United States, or who is being deployed for not less than 180 days, may terminate a motor vehicle lease. The law prohibits early termination charges.

"Now, service members won't have to pay monthly lease payments for a car they can't use," said Colonel Lindemann.

"Service members may not always realize all the protections they have under the law," Colonel Lindemann said. "If service members have questions about the SCRA or the protections that they may be entitled to, they should contact their unit judge advocate or installation legal assistance officer for further assistance."

Kirtland AFB considers utility privatization

BY 2ND LT. KELLEY FINCHER

377th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

Kirtland AFB is reviewing proposals to turn over its gas, water, electricity and sewer responsibilities to a private company.

The proposal process comes from a 1998 DOD directive to determine if utility privatization would save the military money. The base is not required to privatize their utilities; they are just required to determine which makes more fiscal sense.

If utilities are privatized, Kirtland AFB will pay the contractor for getting the product from the base boundary to your office. The new contractor will own the substations, underground pipes, overhead wires and other equipment necessary to distribute utilities on base. Along with operation, the company will be responsible for meter reading, billing and re-

pairs. If utilities are privatized on base, approximately 40 or more federal jobs would be lost in the Civil Engineer Utilities Branch.

Kirtland AFB will continue to purchase the gas, water and electricity at the competitive rate it, while the Department of Energy already pays.

Any utility concerns will still be addressed through the Civil Engineer customer service desk who will then notify the utility contractor.

"The contractors will do the work but we want our customers to have a single point of contact, and to monitor compliance with the terms of the contract," said Mr. Brent Wilson, base civil engineer.

In 1998, DOD required all military installations to complete a privatization evaluation because "inadequate funding and competing priorities" prevented installations from adequately upgrading or maintaining

reliable utility systems. Privatization will theoretically solve this problem by requiring the contractor to not only provide service, but finance the cost of major utility upgrades.

As the second base in the Air Force to evaluate privatization, Kirtland AFB is well along the process. In November, a technical evaluation team researched the adequacy and merits of each proposal. Currently the source selection team is reviewing the cost of each proposal to establish if they are in the best interests of the government.

If the proposals meet both the technical and cost qualifications this month, the base will begin negotiations with prospective companies. The on-base source selection authority will then make the decision of whether or not to privatize. The selection authority could decide to privatize all, some or no utilities on base.

Notice to bargaining unit employees

The following applies to Air Force employees covered by the Master Labor Agreement between Council 214 of the American Federation of Government Employees and Headquarters Air Force Materiel Command:

As required by Section 7114(a)(2)(B) of Title 5, United States Code, this constitutes the annual notification to employees in union bargaining units of their rights to representation.

The union must be given an opportunity to be present at any examination of an employee in the bargaining unit by a management representative in connection with an investigation if:

(1) the employee reasonably believes that the examination may result in disciplinary action against the employee and,

(2) the employee requests representation.

Questions on this matter may be addressed to Ms. Alfreda Lyons Fain, 846-8953, Mr. Alex Montano, 846-9810 or Mr. Bob Woodall at 846-9645 in the Civilian Personnel Flight Employee and Labor-Management Relations Section.

Notice to employees

The following applies to Air Force employees covered by the Master Labor Agreement between Council 214 of the American Federation of Government Employees and Headquarters Air Force Materiel Command:

Employees desiring to initiate an authorization for dues withholding may obtain an SF 1187 from any AFGE steward or official. The effective date will be the first full pay period after receipt of the SF 1187 by the Civilian Pay Section.

Employees wishing to discontinue their dues withholding may obtain SF 1188s from the Civilian Pay Section or the Labor Relations Office. Discontinuance of dues withholding will be effective as follows:

(1) For an employee who began dues withholding allotments before 11 January 1979: Beginning the first full pay period following 1 September provided the SF 1188 is received by the Civilian Pay Section prior to 1 September.

(2) For an employee who started dues withholding on or after 11 January 1979: Beginning the first full pay period following the particular anniversary date (the anniversary date is the starting date of the first pay period for which dues were deducted from the employee's pay).

Questions on this matter may be addressed to Ms. Alfreda Lyons Fain, 846-8953, Mr. Alex Montano, 846-9810 or Mr. Bob Woodall at 846-9645 in the Civilian Personnel Flight Employee and Labor-Management Relations Section.